

But before we need to do that, we must set up a central command center to coordinate the response from top to bottom. One of the many complaints that we have heard is that no one is in charge. We need someone leading the recovery efforts, calling the shots and directing the resources where they are needed most. We are now a Nation at war with time, and we need a real war room to ensure these people survive.

Another complaint we hear often is a lack of communication. There is no power, so TVs and radios do not work and cell phone communication is sketchy at best.

Today, almost 5 days after Hurricane Katrina rocked the Gulf Coast, people still have no idea what to do. First responders need good information to tell people where to go for help. Rescue workers need the Federal Government to pitch in and give them the communication and technology necessary to coordinate their efforts.

Finally, law and order must be restored. People in these flood-ravaged areas are homeless, scared and desperate. Some have crossed the line and turned to violence. The National Guard needs to move in immediately in massive numbers to restore peace and stability along with local law enforcement.

This is all on the short term. In the long term, these hurricane victims need somewhere to go until their towns and cities can be rebuilt. The Federal Government needs to consider opening up military bases across the country so families can live there until they are put back in their homes or put back in their own lives. Every State in the country should consider taking a certain number of families and housing them in their State so everyone can pitch in.

Finally, once we have done all of this, we must evaluate what was done wrong and what was done right. We must learn from this experience so that we can better respond the next time.

In closing, I know there are many inspiring stories that are not being told, the massive efforts of the Coast Guard to rescue everyone they could and other individuals out there who have put their lives on the line to help and save other people, the neighbors helping neighbors make it through the worst natural disaster many have ever seen. Those are not the stories that are making the evening news.

But I know the true value of the American spirit. In these dark times, I know these communities will be rebuilt, and these families, these cities and towns and this Nation will persevere.

#### HELPING THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon in support of the supplemental appropriation. It is with great sadness that we are being called upon today to address this issue.

Let me begin my remarks by first commending those great Americans who are engaged in the rescue efforts down in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. They are great Americans.

This tragedy today brings back unpleasant memories. It was my district in eastern North Carolina that was devastated in 1999 by Hurricane Floyd; and so we know so well, so well, the pain of those people who are displaced. So on behalf of the people of the First Congressional District of North Carolina, we offer our prayers and sincere concern for their welfare.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the absence of an adequate plan to cope with the damage done by this hurricane. Hurricane Katrina has triggered a nightmare, a nightmare, for thousands of our citizens. Many thousands at this very moment are in harm's way. They are displaced, they are hungry, they need medical assistance. They need every resource that this government has available, and that includes FEMA's assistance, transportation and housing assistance from the military and other humanitarian assistance.

These displaced families must be extricated from the danger that surrounds them; and we have the capacity, we have the capacity to do it, and we must accelerate our efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that several military bases are willing and able to provide immediate housing for these victims. Space is available. There is substantial housing resources on our bases, and we must use them. As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I encourage us to use our military resources to the fullest.

There are many, many communities across the South and across this country who are eager to provide housing and health care and education for these victims. In Columbia, South Carolina, for example, those great Americans want to care for these victims; and they are conferencing right now with the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

In my State of North Carolina, Laurinburg Institute is eager to provide space and educational opportunities for up to 200 school-age children. We must begin to move these families to loving American communities.

Mr. Speaker, we must also protect communities. We must protect communities who open their resources to displaced families. We must guarantee to them that the cost of care for these families will be provided. We must also guarantee that they will not incur any legal liability as a result of their efforts.

So I want to encourage FEMA to quickly secure trailer homes needed for temporary housing. My constituents in

1999 were required to wait, in our opinion, an unreasonable time before trailers were erected. I know it cannot be done with the snap of a finger, but the process must be expedited. FEMA must execute a comprehensive plan that will not result in the dumping of these displaced families when the FEMA specialists complete their work. This was a problem in 1999. These specialists must provide one message, and they must stay on site until every issue is resolved.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government provide full financial assistance to these displaced families, and that includes housing and health care for those who choose to decline FEMA housing and elect to stay with their family and their friends. They too, they too deserve an assistance stipend.

The distinguished gentleman from California, the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, stated a few minutes ago, actually it was a couple of hours ago now, that money will not make the difference in the final analysis. Well, I understand the import of that statement, but I want to emphasize that adequate money resources will make life better, will make life better for these Americans. We should not suggest otherwise.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Federal Government does not and cannot act with precision in these types of disasters, but we must insist that FEMA and the military and the National Guard and other rescue efforts engage in coordinated efforts, and we must provide the resources.

I applaud and support the minority leader's suggestion of a select hurricane task force. I support the idea.

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#### REBUILDING COMMUNITIES DEVASTATED BY HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the emergency supplemental appropriations for hurricane disaster relief. The \$10.5 billion that we have acted upon today will be a downpayment, and we must recognize it as such, a downpayment on a much longer-term investment that we will have to make to restore the communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

I commend the leadership, majority and minority, of both the House and the Senate, for this timely response, as we did in reacting to the attacks of September 11, 2001. I especially appreciate the persistence of our minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), in pressing for action by Congress this week, not waiting until after return from the Labor Day recess.